

Daniel Patterson to Andrew Jackson, April 3, 1815, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

COMMODORE DANIEL T. PATTERSON TO JACKSON.

New Orleans, April 3, 1815.

Sir, In answer to your note of yesterday, I have the honor to state; that the appearance, of the Enemy's force on this coast, and their capture of our Gun Boats; the weak state of this city, and its environs; and the situation of the country generally, was such, as in my opinion, made the declaration of Martial Law indispensable. I know that the same opinion was held by the Executive of this State; and that the State Legislature thought so likewise; was fully proved, by the acts passed by them, previous to the proclamation of Martial Law, authorizing the impressment of seamen, and laying an Embargo, measures, wholly growing out of the necessity of the case and exigencies of the times.

I had, at the time little opportunity of knowing the opinion of the Judiciary; my personal duties occupied me wholly; but the discharge of these very duties, made me know that Mr. Lewis, one of the State Judges served in the Ranks of a volunteer company of Militia, as a private soldier, and being afterwards chosen and appointed a Lieutenant, he served in the same company until the peace. I do beleive that the proclamation, and enforcement of Martial Law was necessary, for the defence of the Country and preservation of the City; and that by those measures, it could alone be saved; and at the time such was the universal sentiment of all good citizens. Under the Law of the State I did press into the naval service of the United States, a number of seamen and held them in service, until the peace took place; my empressments were made in open day in the most frequented parts of the City and were of course matter of notriety.

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I have the honor to be with great respect